Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 0003 with the following amended paragraph:

[0003]   This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. [[60/---,---]] 60/541,626, entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR CONTINUOUS DATA PROTECTION," filed on February 4, 2004; and U.S. Provisional Application No. [[60/---,---]] 60/542,011, entitled "CONTINUOUS DATA PROTECTION IN A COMPUTER SYSTEM," filed on February 5, 2004, both of which are incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

Please replace paragraph 0052 with the following amended paragraph:

[0052]   In step 410, a delta map is created by converting the time-ordered write log entries to a block-ordered delta map. Next, in step 412, it is determined whether pre-merge optimization will be performed. If so, delta maps are periodically merged to provide a greater granularity in the data on the secondary volume (step 414). It is noted that merging of delta maps can occur at any time and according to any desired policy. In the preferred embodiment, the merging algorithm looks for adjacent delta maps with the same expiration policy and merges those. This minimizes the number of merge operations that will be required upon expiration. In a different embodiment, pre-merging occurs automatically after a certain number of writes W or after a certain time period T. Additionally, the system is capable of storing full maps of the primary volume at various points in time. This significantly accelerates the merging process later because fewer maps need to be merged. Regardless of whether pre-merge optimization is performed (step 412), the method 400 cycles back to step 404.